



Respiratory Therapy

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Associate in Applied Science Degree (5 semesters) Career Cluster: Health Science

At a Glance

A respiratory therapist is responsible for administering, under physician's prescription, many types of breathing therapeutics, and utilizing specialized breathing, aerosol and humidification equipment. These include the use of oxygen or oxygen mixtures, chest physiotherapy, mechanical ventilation, and aerosol medications.

Respiratory therapists evaluate and treat all types of patients, ranging from premature infants whose lungs are not fully developed to elderly people whose lungs may be diseased. Respiratory therapists provide temporary relief to patients with chronic asthma or emphysema, as well as emergency care to patients who are victims of a heart attack, stroke, trauma, drowning, or shock. They perform limited physical examinations, and conduct diagnostic tests that assess breathing capacities and determine the concentration of oxygen and other gases in patients. The respiratory therapist works closely with the physician and also directly with the patient in the treatment situation by performing regular assessments of patients and equipment.

Program Description

This program is designed to provide necessary training for successful completion of the requirements for the advanced practitioner level as defined by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC). A respiratory therapist is responsible for administering under physician's prescription many types of breathing therapeutics, and utilizing specialized breathing, aerosol, and humidification equipment. The respiratory therapist works closely with the physician and also directly with the patient in the treatment situation, which is an attractive feature of this career. The Respiratory Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) (www.coarc.com). Upon graduation the student is eligible to apply to take the registry examination of the National Board of Respiratory Care.

Admission Requirements

Applicants Must:

1. Meet all the general admission requirements of WSCC.
2. Submit WSCC application to the Admissions Office.
Submit a RPT Program application to the RP Program Director with **unofficial college transcripts**. Applications will be accepted until **June 1**. Applications received after June 1 will be considered on a space available basis.
3. Possess a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
4. Have grades of "C" or better in prerequisite general required courses to be considered for the program. All prerequisite general required courses must be completed prior to beginning the Respiratory Therapy major courses in fall semester.
5. Attain a minimum of 18 on the ACT and submit that score to the Admissions Office. It is the responsibility of each

applicant to insure that his or her application is complete and that all prerequisite general education required courses have been completed.

Selection and Notification

1. The Respiratory Therapy Program admits applicants in the fall semester each year.
2. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Written notification of the outcome of each application will be mailed to the student at the address provided on the application.
3. All other factors being equal, applicants will be ranked by ACT score to determine admission if there are more applicants than can be accepted.

Program Expectations

Students admitted into the Respiratory Therapy program are expected to comply with the Health Science Program Regulations and Expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog.

Required Competencies:

Respiratory Therapy Students must demonstrate numerous competencies representing all three learning domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Students learn, practice, and verify these competencies in a number of settings including the classroom, laboratory, and clinic. Respiratory therapy laboratories provide students with the opportunity to view demonstrations, evaluate and practice with medical devices, and perform simulated clinical procedures. In addition to the cognitive skills required in the class room, students must demonstrate psychomotor skills in manipulation of patients and equipment, as well as general professional behaviors, like team-building and interpersonal communications. To satisfy laboratory and clinic requirements, students must perform all procedures without critical error.

Upon Admission:

In order to enroll in the program after acceptance, students must attend a mandatory orientation session. A student who fails to respond will forfeit his/her place in the class. A signed consent to drug testing is required prior to enrollment. Upon acceptance into the program, students must submit a physical examination form (current within one year), which includes documentation of immunizations along with evidence of having begun the Hepatitis B vaccinations. Students are required to provide proof of current CPR certification from a health care provider course prior to attending clinical. Students will also be required to successfully complete a background check and drug screening.

Progression

RPT students must achieve a "C" or above in all general and major required courses. Students who fail to achieve a "C" or above in a major required course cannot progress and will be dismissed from the Program and must re-apply for readmission. A minimal grade of 75 constitutes a "C" in Respiratory Therapy courses.

Readmission to Program:

Readmission is allowed only once. Students are required to complete the program within three (3) years of entry into the program.

Career Path

As a Respiratory Therapist, you will have numerous opportunities to specialize and advance. If you are in clinical practice, you can change from general care to care of critical patients who have extensive problems with other organ systems such as the heart or kidneys. You can also advance to supervisory or managerial positions in a respiratory therapy department. Respiratory Therapists working in home health care and equipment rental facilities may become branch managers.

Specializations:

- Respiratory Therapists may work in neonatal-pediatrics in children's hospitals and general hospitals with neonatal pediatric wards.
- Pulmonary rehabilitation therapists provide care and education to patients with chronic lung diseases like asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and pulmonary fibrosis.
- Want to help people sleep better? Then specializing in polysomnography may be for you. Sleep laboratories generally employ Respiratory Therapists who often work the night shift when the sleep studies are conducted.
- Home care work is often a next good step for you if like to visit with patients and be out and about. Most Respiratory Therapists working in home care have extensive experience working in a hospital or other health care setting since home care necessitates a lot of independent thinking.
- If you like doing detective work to solve a mystery, then working in pulmonary diagnostics is a good specialization for you. By conducting pulmonary function tests, you help physicians diagnose whether a patient has a lung disease and, if so, which one.

Job opportunities are expected to be very good, especially for respiratory therapists with cardiopulmonary care skills or experience working with infants. Employment of respiratory therapists is expected to increase faster than average through 2018 due to substantial growth in the numbers of the middle aged and elderly population and the expanding role of respiratory therapists in the early detection and treatment of pulmonary disorders. There are also job opportunities for respiratory therapists with advanced cardiopulmonary care and neonatal care experience.

Although hospitals will continue to employ the vast majority of therapists, a growing number can expect to work outside of hospitals in home health care services, offices of physicians or other health practitioners, or consumer-goods rental firms.

Median annual earnings of respiratory therapists were \$53,150 in May 2008. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics) Additional career advancement opportunities exist in education, administration, research, and in commercial companies as clinical specialist, pharmaceutical sales, and technical support.

Students wanting to earn a four year degree may do so by transferring to Athens State University – Bachelor of Science in Health Science and University of Alabama Birmingham – Bridge program for Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Therapy. Please consult STARS transfer guide for the latest information.

Completion Requirements

GENERAL REQUIRED COURSES (Prerequisite)

ENG 101 English Composition I	3
MTH 100 Intermediate College Algebra	3
BIO 201** Human Anatomy and Physiology I	<u>4</u>
	10

** BIO 103 is a prerequisite class for this course.

GENERAL REQUIRED COURSES

ORI 101* Orientation to College	1
ENG 102 English Composition II	3
HUM Humanities/Fine Arts Elective	3
BIO 202 Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
PSY 200 General Psychology	<u>3</u>
	13-14
TOTAL HOURS	23-24

*See ORI 101 information on p. 20 of WSCC College Catalog.

MAJOR REQUIRED COURSES

RPT 210 Clinical Practice I	2
RPT 211 Introduction to Respiratory Care	2
RPT 212 Fundamentals of Respiratory Care I	4
RPT 213 Anatomy & Physiology RPT Care Pract.	3
RPT 214 Pharmacology for the RPT Care Pract	2
RPT 220 Clinical Practice II	2
RPT 221 Pathology for the RPT Care Practitioner I	3
RPT 222 Fundamentals of Respiratory Care II	4
RPT 223 Acid Base Reg/Arterial Blood Gas Analysis	2
RPT 230 Clinical Practice III	2
RPT 231 Pathology for the RPT Care Practitioner II	3
RPT 232 Diagnostic Procedures for RPT Care Pract	2
RPT 233 Special Procedures for the RPT Care Pract	2
RPT 234 Mechanical Ventilation	3
RPT 240 Clinical Practice IV (Internship)	4
RPT 241 Pulmonary Rehab & Home Care	2
RPT 242 Perinatal/Pediatric RPT Care	3
RPT 243 Computer Apps for the RPT Care Pract	2
RPT 244 Critical Care Consid for the RPT Care Pract	2
RPT Elective	1
RPT Elective	<u>2</u>
	52

TOTAL HOURS 75